

Mainstreaming the Sex Industry: Economic Inclusion and Social Ambivalence

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This paper seeks to analyse the expansion of commercial sex through processes of mainstreaming in economic and social institutions. We argue that cultural changes and neo-liberal policies and attitudes have enabled economic mainstreaming, whilst social ambivalence continues to provide the backdrop to a prolific and profitable global industry. We chart the advancement of sexual consumption and sexual service provision in late capitalism before defining the concept of 'mainstreaming' applied here. We use the case studies of Las Vegas and Leeds to identify various social and economic dimensions to the mainstreaming process and the ways these play out in law and regulation. While social and economic processes have integrated sexual services into night-time commerce, remaining social ambivalence fuels transgression and marginalization of the industry which in fact assists the mainstreaming process. Finally, we project some implications for gender relations, work, and inequalities as a result of the integration of sexual services into the economy.

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to analyse the expansion of commercial sex through processes of mainstreaming in economic and, to a lesser extent, social institutions. We argue that cultural changes and neo-liberal policies and attitudes have enabled economic mainstreaming, whilst social ambivalence continues to provide the backdrop to a prolific and profitable global industry. We initially chart the advancement of sexual consumption and sexual service

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provision in late capitalism before defining the concept of ‘mainstreaming’ applied in this paper. From our work, we use the case studies of Las Vegas, United States of America, and Leeds, United Kingdom to identify various social and economic dimensions to the mainstreaming process and the ways these play out in law and regulation.

While social and economic processes have integrated sexual services into night-time commerce, remaining social ambivalence fuels transgression and marginalization of the industry which in fact assists the mainstreaming process. Finally, we project some implications for gender relations, work, and inequalities as a result of the integration of sexual services into the economy.

ANALYSING THE RISE OF COMMERCIAL SEX

International travel, mobility, changes in consumption patterns, more leisure time, and neo-liberal state policies, have increased the visibility of sexual commerce in a global economy. The media has made much of the mainstreaming of sexual commerce.¹ Globalization has encouraged a dramatic growth in a worldwide sex industry that was worth ‘at least \$20 billion a year and probably many times that’, the *Economist* estimated in 1998.² Moffat and Peters used Internet data to calculate that the indoor massage parlours business in the United Kingdom was worth approximately £534 million per annum in 1999.³ Jones et al. cautiously estimate the annual turnover of lap-dancing bars in the United Kingdom to stand at £300 million in 2002.⁴ In the United States, an industry report estimated adult entertainment to be worth more than \$12 billion in 2005.⁵ Two of the largest lap-dancing club chains reported earnings of around \$60 million each in 2008.⁶ Analysts say that these companies are proving to be fairly recession resistant, holding profits well compared to many companies, despite economic downturns. These economic ‘facts’ suggest prevalence and durability, contributing to what commentators such as McNair and Attwood

1 See S. Paasonen, K. Nikunen, and L. Saarenmaa, *Pornification: Sex and Sexuality in Media Culture* (2007).

2 ‘Giving the Customer What He Wants’ *Economist*, 14 February 1998.

3 P.G. Moffatt and S.A. Peters, ‘Pricing Personal Services: An Empirical Study of Earnings in the UK Prostitution Industry’ (2004) 51 *Scottish J. of Political Economy* 675–90.

4 P. Jones, P. Shears, and D. Hillier, ‘Retailing and the Regulatory State: A Case Study of Lap Dancing Clubs in the UK’ (2003) 31 *International J. of Retail and Distribution Management* 214–19, at 215.

5 M.L. Freridge, *Adult Entertainment in America: A State of the Industry Report* (2006).

6 ‘More Women Working in Adult Entertainment’ *MSNBC*, 30 March 2009, available at <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29824663/>>. The two companies are VCG Holding, owning more than twenty nightclubs, and also Rick’s Cabaret.

describe as an increased respectability, both in how these businesses look and what people think of them.⁷

Despite this increased social presence, very little research has investigated the *processes* of mainstreaming and what this reveals about law, regulation and social change. Therefore, in this paper we ask two questions: how have sexual businesses accomplished the move towards acceptability in non-sex industry commercial networks and what has been the effect on the supply of and demand for sexual consumption and labour? In answering these questions, we hope to shed light on the economic and social mechanisms underlying the process of mainstreaming. Both the supply of and demand for sexual commerce has important implications for our understandings both of gender and sexuality in the workplace – given that sexual labour is a mainstream work option for a significant proportion of women in society – and for wider gender inequalities in society.⁸

This paper will rely on a comparative study of sexual commerce in two cities: Las Vegas, Nevada, a large tourist-based city in the western United States, and Leeds, a large metropolitan city in the north of England. Comparative qualitative research of informal economies is important as it offers insights into the establishment of wider global trends that span continents and contexts. These two cities were chosen due to the high levels of sexual commerce visible in their night-time economies. After a brief discussion of the concept of mainstreaming and the economic and social forces driving it, we will examine three facets of mainstreaming in these two cities: the economics of the industry, the regulation of the sex industry, and the effectiveness of their social integration. The study will then discuss the effects of these efforts on the supply of and demand for sexual consumption and labour, and what this reveals about the law and regulation of sexual commerce in today's societies.

DEFINING MAINSTREAMING

Just what does 'mainstreaming' mean? Both popular and academic accounts use the term in different ways. One of the most common uses has been to refer to the expansion in the size of the sex industry in the United Kingdom, the United States, and across the globe.⁹ Mainstreaming also has been associated with the spread of the adult entertainment industry into businesses

7 B. McNair, *Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratization of Desire* (2002); F. Attwood, 'Sexed Up: Theorizing the Sexualization of Culture' (2006) 9 *Sexualities* 77–94.

8 Note that throughout the paper we are referring to the adult female heterosexual sex industry unless otherwise stated.

9 'The Business of Pornography' *U.S. News & World Report*, 10 February 1997; 'How Big Is Porn?' *Forbes*, 25 May 2001; McNair, op. cit., n. 7.

that do not directly supply sex, such as the growth of profits from adult videos via pay per view for large hotel chains, or the role of the sex industry in fuelling Internet commerce in general. The term mainstreaming has also described some sex workers, like adult film stars Jenna Jameson or Sasha Grey, who have crossed over into mainstream film and television.¹⁰ Both media and academic research note a shift in the social classes typically associated with the sex industry. Media increasingly highlight the growth of both middle-class consumers and workers in adult markets, and with that a subtle shift in the perceived respectability of those involved in the industry.¹¹

The concept of mainstreaming thus involves two interrelated factors, economic integration and social integration. Economic mainstreaming involves processes that push businesses toward smoother integration with mainstream economic institutions. Economic mainstreaming can involve changes in business forms, marketing, and distribution whereby sex businesses look and act like majority, conventional, ordinary, normal businesses. For example, mainstreaming sex-industry businesses can adopt traditional business forms such as corporate structures, vertical and horizontal integration, chains, franchises, marketing techniques, and traditional forms of financing. Mainstreaming can include horizontal integration, where a sexual business owns non-sexual businesses, such as a brothel that also owns a restaurant. Sex-industry businesses can be more integrated with other businesses by relying on non-sex industry businesses for marketing, advertising, distribution, manufacturing, or other business services. Mainstreaming also involves changes in marketing. Their look, feel, product and image embodies a conscious attempt to mimic aspects of non-sexual products and services (such as retail outlets that look like traditional storefronts or other night-time leisure venues, packaging that is non-sexual, labels for services that cast the service as a less transgressive one). Quite often these attempts to 'look' more mainstream are coded with class – upscaling in order to move away from traditional working-class sexual codes. Mainstreaming also includes a variety of techniques to bring in newer markets that may not otherwise have purchased sexual services or goods, including marketing to women and more diversity in age, ethnicity, and even sexual orientation.

Social mainstreaming shifts cultural attitudes toward the acceptability of sexuality as a legitimate form of commerce and pushes businesses toward

10 *MSNBC*, op. cit., n. 6. Jenna Jameson is an award-winning erotic film star, owns a multimedia adult entertainment company, and has also appeared on a number of mainstream American television sitcoms and other shows. Sasha Grey is an adult film star who appeared in a Spring 2009 mainstream film directed by Steven Soderbergh, *The Girlfriend Experience*.

11 Academic researcher Elizabeth Bernstein notes a specific trend of more middle-class women entering the sex industry to make a living, and selling sexual services to a mainly middle-class audience on the Internet. See E. Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (2007).

smoother integration with mainstream social institutions. This is most visible in the arena of advertising where the sexualized female form (and to a lesser extent male bodies) sells a range of products from cars to clothing to deodorant. Bodies, physicality, and sexuality as modes of commercialization in all aspects of consumerism have allowed the direct and indirect purchase of sexual services to become more visible and accessible on the high street and in public spaces. There are some specific examples that support this point: research by Storr and Comella, for example, describes the increasing respectability as both sex toys (aimed at women through the Ann Summers high-street chain) and adult videos are increasingly marketing toward women.¹² It appears that other parts of the commercial sex industry are following this example, with Nevada's legal brothels similarly relying on business associations for lobbying, using corporate business structures, adding restaurants, and marketing to more upscale and female customers.¹³ Thus, commercial sex has become mainstreamed as a direct consequence of broader social changes in the relative acceptability of bodies as commodities.

LATE CAPITALISM AND MAINSTREAMING

Academic researchers have pointed out changes in late-capitalist culture and economies that encourage and 'normalize' the growth of sexual commerce. Late-capitalist mass consumption has encouraged a pornographication of culture, a liberalization of sexual attitudes, and more egalitarian attitudes toward intimacy with an element of disposability about relationships if they are not providing full satisfaction.¹⁴ Commentators such as media analyst Brian McNair label the persistence of a culture and media that encourage sexual revelation, voyeurism, and sexualized looking as 'striptease culture'.¹⁵ This 'sexed-up' nature of contemporary society forms the backdrop to understanding the prevalence and visibility of sex venues in Western society.¹⁶

12 M. Storr, *Latex and Lingerie: Shopping for Pleasure at Ann Summers* (2003); L. Comella, 'It's Sexy. It's Big Business. And It's Not Just for Men' (2003) 7 *Contexts* 61–3.

13 K. Hausbeck and B.G. Brents, 'Inside Nevada's Brothel Industry' in *Sex for Sale*, ed. R. Weitzer (2000); B.G. Brents and K. Hausbeck, 'Marketing Sex: U.S. Legal Brothels and Late Capitalist Consumption' (2007) 10 *Sexualities* 425–39. B.G. Brents, C. Jackson, and K. Hausbeck, *The State of Sex* (2010).

14 A. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (1992); McNair, op. cit., n. 7; S. Jackson and S. Scott, 'Sexual Antinomies in Late Modernity' (2004) 7 *Sexualities* 233–48; U. Beck and E. Beck-Gernsheim, *The Normal Chaos of Love* (1995); G. Hawkes, *A Sociology of Sex and Sexuality* (1996); Z. Bauman, *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds* (2003); K. Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues* (2003).

15 McNair, op. cit., n. 7; Attwood, op. cit., n. 7; R. Gill, *Gender and the Media* (2007).

16 McNair, id.; Attwood id.; Gill, id.

Other major social changes interplay with the dynamic changes of sexualized culture. As religion declines, it loses its power as a sexual regulator, as the promotion of traditional sexual values is increasingly questioned or rejected.¹⁷ The market takes these opportunities apparent in social change and seeks to exploit any changes in sexual values. Studies are also demonstrating an increasing commercialization or commodification of intimacy and a heightened sexualization of gendered forms of work.¹⁸ Thus, sexuality has become a central component of late-capitalist consumer culture.

Mainstreaming of the sex industry is invariably linked to wider patterns in leisure consumption, travel, and the hedonistic search for relaxation and pleasure. Global tourists increasingly consume services that sell escapism, themed adventure, spectacle, fantasy, voyeurism, and even transgression. Workers increasingly sell emotions, performances, and connections in an unequal context. The sexualization of work is particularly noticeable in empirical studies of the tourism, leisure, beauty, and restaurant industries.¹⁹

These transformations are affecting industries and work outside of the sex industry, and there is a large literature debating what this means for identity. Adkins notes that the material conditions of both sex workers and women who work in other industries are similar because 'sexual servicing of men may not be specific to the "sex industry" but rather is a common feature of women's waged work'.²⁰ In other words, sex work and mainstream service work are becoming increasingly similar.²¹

Yet also in this context a now globalized sex industry itself has grown tremendously, as legal and illegal services and a myriad of sexual products flood First World markets and connect rich consumers (male and female) with poor workers throughout the developed and developing world.²² Thus,

17 J. Scott, 'Changing Attitudes to Sexual Morality: A Cross-National Comparison' (1998) 32 *Sociology* 815–45

18 A.R. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1983); L. Adkins and V. Merchant, *Sexualizing the Social: Power and the Organization of Sexuality* (1996); E. Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1997); L. Adkins, *Revisions: Gender and Sexuality in Late Modernity* (2002); V.A.R. Zelizer, *The Purchase of Intimacy* (2005).

19 P. Crang, 'It's Showtime: On the Workplace Geographies of Display in a Restaurant in Southern England' (1994) 12 *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 675–704; L. Adkins, *Gendered Work: Sexuality, Family and the Labour Market* (1995); M. Tyler and P. Abbott, 'Chocs Away: Weight Watching in the Contemporary Airline Industry' (1998) 32 *Sociology* 433–50; P. Black, *The Beauty Industry: Gender, Culture, Pleasure* (2004).

20 L. Adkins, *Gendered Work: Sexuality, Family and the Labour Market* (1995) 158.

21 B.G. Brents and K. Hausbeck, 'Sex Work Now: What the Blurring Boundaries around the Sex Industry Means for Sex Work, Research and Activism' in *Beyond Divides: Exploring Money, Power and Intimacy in the Sex Industry*, eds. M. Ditmore, A. Levy, and A. Willman (2010).

22 For an account, see M. Padilla, *Caribbean Pleasure Industry: Tourism, Sexuality, and AIDS in the Dominican Republic* (2007).

even as the sex industry is normalized, it also feeds the transgressive attractions of the sex industry.²³ Even middle-class workers in First World countries find themselves turning to sex work for a liveable wage in a social structure conditioned by high-cost urban living and comparatively low wages for long hours.

NEO-LIBERAL REGULATION

Most certainly, the massive global economic and social changes of the last century have been a driving force in affecting the mainstreaming of the sex industry. This has been accelerated by neo-liberal policies of deregulation which have restructured local and national governance processes and supported the globalization of markets on a wider scale than previously possible. The growth of a neo-liberalism in the past forty years has meant, across the world, governments have increasingly designed policies to remove regulations seen as reducing market competition to allow business to flourish. Notions of individual liberty and responsibility have replaced protective regulations and social supports. This has allowed all sorts of enterprises to expand, including the sex industry.

This rhetoric of the free market and individual freedom has spread to the regulation of morality and sexuality. The obscenity, sodomy, and anti-pornography laws that once constrained sexual behavior and consumption are increasingly challenged by a more general legal ethic which reflects the morality of the market, the contract, and the principle of free choice. The new technologies, specifically the Internet, that drive the mainstreaming of sex industries have remained largely unregulated by official agencies and lie outside the remit of other advertising regulations.²⁴

Consumption promotes a morality where personal choice is elevated to a moral right. Choice, be it choice of lifestyle or choice of product, is quickly becoming the new moral principle of our age. The service industry also allows for personal relations to be marketed as uncomplicated, free, contractual arrangements within the market. This new moral principle means that the content of the choice is irrelevant; it is the right to choose that matters. In other words, this free-market liberalism has also been injected into our personal morality.²⁵ This can be understood sociologically as a consequence of the transformations in individuals and society brought about

23 C. Seib et al., 'Commercial Sexual Practices Before and After Legalization in Australia' (2008) *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, published online 30 December 2008 at <<http://www.springerlink.com/content/d432686008581243/>>.

24 T. Sanders, M. O'Neill, and J. Pitcher, *Sex Work, Policy and Practice* (2009); P. Jenkins, *Beyond Tolerance: Child Pornography on the Internet* (2001).

25 G. Hawkes, *A Sociology of Sex and Sexuality* (1996); M. Prasad, 'The Morality of Market Exchange: Love, Money, and Contractual Justice' (1999) 42 *Sociological Perspectives* 181–214.

by consumerism. Bauman describes the present era as a 'liquid modernity' – a mass consumer culture in which a society of producers has become a society of consumers, where individuals become the commodities. It is these social, economic, and cultural changes that have promoted the growth of the sex industry as a consumer right and choice.²⁶

While many of these changes promote economic and social integration of sexual commerce, there remains social ambivalences. In the United States, these changes have been at the centre of what some call culture wars.²⁷ There remains considerable anxiety about the specialness of sex and its 'rightful' place in socially proscribed conventional intimate relationship.²⁸ There is increasing polarization over moral issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and variable degrees of tolerance of permissive sexual relations between different social classes, racial and ethnic groups, urban and rural dwellers, especially in the United States. The United Kingdom is equally in some turmoil when it comes to establishing norms regarding what types of sex are acceptable. Recent years have seen a positive shift in the formal recognition of diverse sexualities. In the United Kingdom, same-sex unions were legalized through civil partnerships in 2004. The Gender Recognition Act in 2004 increased rights for those seeking gender reassignment. Yet, alongside this, there are very distinct areas targeted as morally and socially corrupt: sex in public, cottaging, sado-masochism, pornography, and prostitution have been subject to increased criminal controls.²⁹ So, even as we document a liberalization of sexual attitudes and gender scripts, there is also entrenchment around traditional roles, practices, and values. It is clear that gender, as well as sexual attitudes and practices, are in the midst of a major transformation that is best understood in conjunction with changes in other realms, such as the economy, labour, leisure, commodity, culture, and the self.

Thus, while massive global and social changes drive the mainstreaming of the sex industry, particularly in economic institutions, social ambivalences often find their way into the law and regulations affecting the sex industry. Certainly neo-liberal politics encourages many localities to pass regulations that encourage entrepreneurialism. In doing so, they often do not or cannot discriminate on type of business, making it easier to establish sex-work venues. Examples from Las Vegas and the Licensing Act 2005 in the United Kingdom (both detailed below) demonstrate the ways in which official

26 Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (2000).

27 L. Duggan and N.D. Hunter, *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture* (1995); R. Weitzer, 'Deficiencies in the Sociology of Sex Work' (2000) 2 *Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance* 2; R. Weitzer, 'The Politics of Prostitution in America' in *Sex for Sale*, ed. R. Weitzer (2000) 159–80.

28 Jackson and Scott, op. cit., n. 14.

29 P. Johnson, 'Ordinary Folk and Cottaging: Law, Morality, and Public Sex' (2007) 34 *J. of Law and Society* 520–43.

mechanisms have supported the growth of different sex markets. Even in areas that criminalize all (such as Las Vegas city itself) or some aspects of commercial sex (as in the United Kingdom where there is an official policy encouraging the ‘eradication’ of street-sex markets), commercial sex can still thrive. Yet governments rarely enthusiastically embrace mainstreaming sex businesses. From religious organizations to fundamentalist feminist organizations, there are powerful social movements that put considerable pressure on governments to keep remaining regulations on certain sex businesses. Thus, pressures toward economic integration are tempered by considerable social ambivalences.

We now turn to a comparison of sexual commerce and regulation in Leeds and Las Vegas, illustrating the way in which the informal sexual economies in these two cities are reflectant of these larger trends in economic and social mainstreaming.

THE TALE OF TWO CITIES

1. *Leeds*

The city of Leeds is a dominant economic and cultural metropolis in the north of England. It has a population of approximately 750,000 people with a further 100,000 people working in the city. Its history of being a predominately white, working-class Yorkshire location remains, with the more recent addition of smaller communities from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, China, and the African Caribbean. The engineering and manufacturing base that made Leeds an important town during the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution has become more of a service economy, with media, communications, teaching, and research becoming significant during the twentieth century. Amongst other educational institutions, Leeds now hosts two large universities with an average annual student population of 45,000, and is rated by students as one of the best university locations in the country. Over the past decade the city centre has become a hotbed of regeneration for businesses, urban dwellings (high rise apartment blocks), and high-end retail and entertainment.

The city has a reputation for a lively night-time economy. It has a large music scene with a nightlife tailored to a range of interests and age groups. Notably, the city is a mecca for ‘hen and stag parties’ (pre-marriage single-sex celebrations which revolve around alcohol), and has a visible commercial sex industry. It is this relative visibility, accessibility, and tolerance of commercial sex which enables the city to be compared relatively with Las Vegas. The city has recently seen a large growth in the number of lap-dancing clubs. As of the time of writing, there were twelve such bars throughout the city centre, considerably more than rival cities and arguably the highest number outside London. While direct sexual services are illegal,

there is still a thriving trade in street and off-street markets. A local sex work project, Genesis, has contact with approximately six hundred women in saunas, flats, and escorts and a further two hundred women working on the street in any one year.³⁰ These figures identify that there has been some level of official tolerance of the sex industry historically, particularly in the indoor sex markets. It is only with recent government pressure that the local authority has taken an eradication approach.

2. Las Vegas

Las Vegas, Nevada is a city of nearly two million people, located in the deserts of the western United States. Las Vegas has been one of the fastest growing cities in the United States for the past ten years, fuelled largely by a tourist economy that has grown up around legalized gambling.³¹ Called a 'triumph of globalised postindustrial capitalism',³² Las Vegas's resorts market glamour, spectacle, fantasy, and adventure through images of vice, gambling, sex, and sin. The city advertises, 'what happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas'.³³ Las Vegas in 2008 ranked twelfth globally on the number of air passengers and is the forty-eighth most visited city in the world.³⁴ Las Vegas attracts 39 million visitors who spend more than \$41 billion per year. Nearly 20 per cent of the population has immigrated from Mexico, Latin America, and other parts of the world to work in casino and construction jobs.

While the resorts thrive on selling sin and sexuality, the very powerful resort industry association distances itself from any association with the adult entertainment industry. The desire to keep gambling legitimate means corporate resort owners, who have lots to lose, must keep a visible profile cleansed of other vices. As a result, Las Vegas's thriving sex industry is not that much bigger than many resort and convention cities in the United States. As of 2007, there were thirty seven gentlemen's clubs with nearly 100,000 registered dancers in the Las Vegas area. There are many adult boutiques, bookstores, and fetish stores that cater mainly to tourists, as locals are fairly

30 Direct sexual services sell sexual intercourse and related contact, such as prostitution. Indirect sexual services sell sexual interactions or images not involving genital contact with customers, including bondage and discipline, lap dancing, massage, adult film or magazines.

31 P.I.O. US Census Bureau, 'U.S. Census Bureau News Press Release: Nevada in Focus: Census Bureau Pre-Caucus Snapshot' 16 January 2008.

32 M. Gottdiener, C.C. Collins, and D.R. Dickens, *Las Vegas: The Social Production of an All-American City* (1999). H. Rothman, *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (2002).

33 Gottdiener et al., id.

34 C. Bremner, 'Top 150 City Destinations: London Leads the Way' (2007), available at: <http://www.euromonitor.com/Top_150_City_Destinations_London_Leads_the_Way>.

conservative when it comes to sexual entertainment. There is a thriving legal outcall dancing industry where dancers visit hotel rooms and homes. Most of these women then sell sex illegally for tips. Nevada is unique in the United States for having legal brothel prostitution in rural counties, although there are no brothels in the major resort cities.³⁵

Las Vegas's expertise has been in using sexuality and vice as a marketing tool, something it has done well since the 1940s. Yet it does so in ways that make vice mainstream and palatable to middle-class consumers. In other words, it is able to market sexuality as both mainstream and transgressive, as we will discuss later.

MAINSTREAMING SEX INDUSTRIES AND THE LAW

While neo-liberal politics promotes laws that encourage economic integration of sexual commerce, social ambivalence often pushes contradictory regulations. In this section we examine the integration of sexual commerce with mainstream economic, legal, and social institutions in Leeds and Las Vegas.

1. *The mainstreaming sex industry in Leeds*

In many ways, the scale and history of the sex industry in Leeds is not comparable to the rich and infamous history of its counterpart in Las Vegas. Key economic and social differences, such as the relative lack of tourism in Leeds, the international profile, and even the desert location, mean that the two cities are very different in their abilities to soak up, facilitate, and therefore mainstream the sex industry. However, Leeds, like Las Vegas, is increasingly relying on a service and entertainment sector to bolster its economic base. Leeds has interesting dimensions which offers insights into how the mainstreaming process is taking place in the United Kingdom.

Like Las Vegas, officials in Leeds have regulated the sex industry in two distinct ways. First, the direct sex market, particularly street prostitution, has been heavily policed in recent years, following central government's agenda to eradicate prostitution as set out by the Home Office's *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy* in 2006.³⁶ The focus in Leeds also shifted beyond the visible street markets as police raided and closed indoor premises such as brothels and working flats to further 'disrupt the sex markets', in line with

35 K. Hausbeck, B.G. Brents, and C. Jackson, 'Sex Industry and Sex Workers in Nevada' (2006), available at <www.unlv.edu/centers/cdclv/healthnv/health_contents.html>.

36 T. Sanders, *Sex Work: A Risky Business* (2005); T. Sanders, 'Controlling the Anti-Sexual City: Sexual Citizenship and the Disciplining of Female Sex Workers' (2009) 9 *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 507–25.

government objectives. These two activities have been fuelled by the rhetoric of street prostitution as public nuisance and the ‘trafficking’ moral panic that has exaggerated the extent of the problem, and drawn policy and resources away from prostitution in general, towards specific forms of sexual exploitation. Yet, despite years of police crackdowns, dedicated officers, and intolerance towards voluntary sexual services, there is a persistence of street and off-street direct sex markets (even if numbers and visibility fluctuate).

Second, indirect sexual services are tolerated. Recent changes in laws regulating non-sex-industry businesses have facilitated this tolerance. In a prime example of the modern state supporting free market economics, the 2005 Licensing Act reduced previous constraints placed upon premises selling alcohol.³⁷ The law allowed, for the first time, businesses to remain open for twenty-four hours after a minimal risk assessment. Lap-dancing bars were not given any specific licensing assessments but came under the same requirements as any other alcohol venue, including the same risk assessments regarding anti-social behaviour and violence. As these venues are rarely involved with these affrays, and the ‘risks’ are often assessed as minimal, essentially the licensing law gave a green light to entrepreneurs to open lap-dancing bars.

Since then, the number of strip clubs and other night-time entertainment has dramatically increased in Leeds. These legal venues sidle alongside ‘ordinary’ pubs and bars in the high street in the centre and on the periphery of the leisure zones. Lap-dancing clubs cater to all wallets, tastes, and social occasions. The hierarchy of lap-dancing bars goes from the ‘cheap and cheerful’ larger venues which host ‘free’ student nights where dances can be purchased ‘two for the price of one’; middle-of-the-range clubs where there is a stricter entrance code and fee; and at the top of the hierarchy there are elite ‘members-only’ clubs which boast chic and sophisticated surroundings, charge higher prices for entrance, drinks, and dances and are more exclusive regarding clientele (aiming for spendthrift businessmen). This hierarchy is made up of national and multinational operators as well as independent owners. These venues are highly visible on the main streets of Leeds city centre, both physically through flashing neon signs, and public advertising via posters, flyers, and discount coupons. Where clubs are placed in the hierarchy is reflected in the types of advertising, branding, image, offers, and promotion tactics they utilize and even by the physical presence of door staff and attendants.

There also have been very public plans for a ‘superclub’ to be opened next to the city’s main train station. The huge poster at the intended location advertising the new ‘superclub’ is next to the most expensive traditional hotel in town. It boasts a £1 million refurbishment of the building and promises a venue that will host a hundred dancers each night. Currently the new club is offering customers ‘limited free memberships’ and promises of

37 For a review of the consequences of the law, see P. Hadfield, *Bar Wars: Contesting the Night in Contemporary British Cities* (2006).

‘VIP and champagne lounges.’ Reminding the public that this is indeed a *supply* as well as a demand economy, the poster also recruits for dancers. The blatant advertising of this ‘superclub’ and the visibility of strip venues in general demonstrate the level of economic tolerance regarding commercial sex in the city.

While there is considerable integration with mainstream economic institutions, there remains social ambivalence. In 2008 politicians were pressured from a small number of communities to close down lap-dancing venues that were considered to be located in inappropriate places. In addition, the anti-sex industry lobby (Object) has campaigned against exotic dancing as an acceptable job for women, taking the line that such objectification is exploitative and oppressive. Hence, 2009 sees government proposals to reform lap-dancing regulations by reclassifying them as ‘sex encounter establishments’ giving local councils greater powers to take into account local concerns and community objections. This may see a reduction of lap-dancing bars in the future or indeed the closure of existing venues. But then there are most likely to be other regulatory loopholes that will allow businesses to operate, especially in an economic downturn. Even if legislative changes should tighten the freedom on lap-dancing bars that is currently being exploited, economic incentives remain for lap-dancing venues to thrive and become a serious slice of the night-time economy. Therefore, in Leeds, like other large cities in the United Kingdom, the visibility and accessibility of commercial sex as both a form of labour and consumption is on a relative spectrum to that found in Las Vegas.

2. *The mainstreaming sex industry in Las Vegas*

Despite its iconic status as the symbolic centre of the sex industry, Las Vegas has a contradictory approach to its sex industry. On the one hand, the direct sex market, particularly street prostitution, is heavily policed, on the other hand, indirect sexual services are fairly well accepted. Most of the motivation for regulatory approaches to the sex industry revolves around the adult industry’s relationship with the tourism industry. First, officials seek to keep visible prostitution out of the resort areas. Prostitution is illegal in Las Vegas metropolitan area. Police institute occasional crackdowns on street prostitution, enforcing stiffer penalties on women working near resort areas. Authorities also attempt to police indoor direct sexual services. The legal outcall industry greatly irritates local officials, and the vice department run ‘stings’ to catch women illegally selling sex in hotels while on a legal outcall to dance. The local police department claims to have made 5,000 vice related arrests in 2008, although most workers are back at work the following day.³⁸ Because the outcall referral business is legal, business owners cannot be

38 ‘Vice Enforcement’s Top Offenders: Police Are Taking Unprecedented Steps to Keep Prostitution Offenders Off the Streets’ *Las Vegas Rev. J.*, 15 February 2009.

arrested. In fact, outcall businesses advertise on flyers distributed by individuals on public sidewalks outside the casinos, much to the dismay of the resort industry. These adverts are clearly promoting sexual services. The resort industry and local officials have tried hard to get rid of these hawkers, but free speech advocates have successfully defended their right to remain.

In addition to local government controls, some large casinos use their own private security to discourage visible soliciting in casino bars, although some casinos are more diligent than others. Some of the largest resorts are rumoured to have their own assembly of high-class sex workers readily available for VIP customers. Despite these efforts, illegal prostitution thrives in Las Vegas. There are some who estimate that there are more than 3,000 indoor sex workers at any one time, more on the weekends.³⁹

The second approach by officials is limited tolerance toward other indirect sexual services. All adult businesses, clubs, bookstores, and novelty stores are subject to special zoning regulations preventing much mixing with mainstream retail outlets. For the most part, they are subject to the same business and alcohol licenses as other mainstream organizations. In some cases, businesses can deal in limited adult content and not be subject to regulations. Adult bookstores, for example, are only regulated as adult stores if more than 35 per cent of gross sales come from sexually explicit content.

Most strip clubs operate just outside the resort corridors. A few clubs are located in the major tourist areas because they were there before zoning was instituted. Strip clubs are subject to regulations on clothing and how near dancers may be to customers. There is a range of clubs from the downmarket to the ultra chic. But the majority of those in and around the resort areas are mega clubs that can employ as many as three hundred women a night. Some have very upscale décor and a few have on-site restaurants. Most are corporate owned, and almost all of the large national chains have clubs in Las Vegas. Strip clubs have been hoping to get inside casinos for years, but because the gambling industry does not want to be associated with prostitution, the chances of an actual club inside a casino seems remote. At the same time, sexy nightclubs, burlesque and topless dancing revues have long been a part of casino businesses with long-standing semi-nude shows available at ordinary theatres.

Though strip clubs are treated as mainstream businesses, they are often subject to much more surveillance than other businesses. The local police department continually patrols strip clubs for signs of prostitution. A very high-profile federal investigation caught several local officials who had received bribes from a local strip club owner in exchange for favourable regulations.⁴⁰ In spite of this, the industry seems to be thriving. Perhaps as a

39 Hausbeck et al., op. cit., n. 35.

40 A brief description of the investigation, 'Political Corruption: The Galardi Investigation', and an archive of all relevant news stories is at *Las Vegas Rev. J.* website: <<http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/galardi/>>.

sign of just how economically mainstream the sex industry is becoming, the Sin City Chamber of Commerce formed in 2004, and by 2008 had a membership of more than 500 businesses. Yet this story also belies the cultural ambivalence of the sex industry, even in Las Vegas. The Sin City Chamber of Commerce was formed when the two founders, who worked for the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce at the time, began to see the Chamber discriminate against the growing numbers of adult businesses who sought to be members. The two pioneers told the authors in an interview that they decided to start their own chamber precisely because they believed there was a lot of money to be made by accepting these businesses. Among their 500 members, 80 per cent are mainstream, non-sexual businesses (such as accountants, plastic surgeons, and lawyers), 15 per cent are adult and 5 per cent are gay and lesbian businesses.

The organization promotes both economic and social mainstreaming. The founders say that their business is based on both economics and an identity of being open to all business. Their mission statement, which appears at the bottom of their web pages, states their desire to ‘promote, with equality, respect and fairness, the businesses that provide the products and services that Sin City Las Vegas is noted for worldwide’.⁴¹ Mainstream businesses join because they recognize there are profits in providing services to adult-related businesses, including advertising, printing, financial services, attorneys, apparel, and travel agencies. Dedicated, friendly and non-judgemental services provided to sex businesses will generate repeat and loyal custom in a somewhat alienating business world.

The trend then is toward increasing economic integration and social acceptability of adult businesses in Las Vegas. Businesses have also benefited from several high-profile lawsuits by the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada regarding freedom of speech. Spurred by the recent economic recession, two proposals to increase taxes on adult businesses and legalize brothel prostitution in a red-light district downtown were discussed seriously by more local policy makers than in past years, although state legislators rejected both measures. At the same time, the line around acceptable sex is still strong. Businesses catering to the sado-masochism community have found it very difficult to get licenses. An upscale dungeon that opened in February 2008 was shut down six months later for applying through the wrong business license, though some believed the problem was that it was next door to a children’s dance studio. Thus, while businesses are becoming further entrenched in economic institutions, social ambivalence still fuels resistance by some law makers.

41 ‘Sin City Chamber of Commerce’ at <<http://www.sincitychamberofcommerce.com/>>.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL AMBIVALENCE

While economic mainstreaming is a clear trend, social acceptability is not complete. On the one hand, the cultural changes discussed above have encouraged social acceptability of the sex industry. Sanders identifies distinct 'pull' and 'push' factors that have increased the social acceptability of sexual services.⁴² 'Pull' factors provide endless opportunities to buy sex, including increased access through the Internet, travel, and tourism. Cultural changes drive what Illouz calls the 'pleasure saturated culture'.⁴³ The desire for pleasure has resulted, for some, in an outlook that sexual satisfaction is part of a healthy lifestyle, or even a 'right'. The draw to be 'self satisfied' for men of all ages has led to an increase in the social acceptability of buying sexual services (in particular the acceptance of visiting lap-dancing bars as part of bachelor and stag parties and work or business engagements) and, to some extent, reduced stigma for those that do so. The cultural changes can be evidenced through the sheer proliferation and diversity of sex-markets: Harcourt and Donovan note at least 25 different sex markets, and there is evidence that in countries where prostitution is legalized there has been an increase in the provision of 'exotic' sexual services including bondage and discipline, submission, fantasy, the use of sex toys, and lesbian double acts.⁴⁴

The 'push' factors refer to those personal circumstances that encourage men to seek out commercial sex. Age, stage of life, and stage or state of relationships, including unsatisfactory relationships, widowhood, and divorce drive men to seek out paid encounters either in addition to, or instead of, conventional sexual relations.⁴⁵ 'Push' factors are not only motivated by the desire for sex, but for emotional intimacy as part of a physical relationship. Sanders notes that clients who return to the same sex workers seek intimacy, emotional connections, and lasting friendships, in the context and safety of a commercial contract.⁴⁶ In the sex industry, as Bernstein notes, the marketing of 'the girlfriend experience' presents a product that satisfies the demands for an integrated social, emotional, and sexual exchange.⁴⁷

42 T. Sanders, 'Selling Sex in the Shadow Economy' (2008) 35 *International J. of Social Economics* 704–16; T. Sanders, 'Male Sexual Scripts: Intimacy, Sexuality and Pleasure in the Purchase of Commercial Sex' (2008) 42 *Sociology* 400–17.

43 Illouz, op. cit., n. 18.

44 C. Harcourt and B. Donovan, 'The Many Faces of Sex Work' (2005) 81 *Brit. Medical J.* 201–6.

45 H. Ward et al., 'Who Pays for Sex? An Analysis of the Increasing Prevalence of Female Commercial Sex Contacts among Men in Britain' (2005) 81 *Sexually Transmitted Infections* 467–71.

46 T. Sanders, *Paying for Pleasure: Men Who Buy Sex* (2008).

47 Bernstein, op. cit., n. 11; A.K. Murphy and S.A. Venkatesh, 'Vice Careers: The Changing Contours of Sex Work in New York City' (2006) 29 *Qualitative Sociology* 129–54.

The turn towards social acceptability of commercial sex has helped promote the role of the female sex worker as a legitimate and valuable form of sexual labour in society. Although impossible to quantify, more women appear to be working in direct and indirect sexual labour. These workers are not just from poorer or less educated backgrounds. There are obvious 'push' factors for why women enter the sex industry: financial gain, as fewer well-paying jobs are available; low welfare benefits compared to the cost of living (especially for single mothers); and marginalization from the mainstream employment structure. According to a British government report, between August 2007 and July 2008, 5,514 people applied for 351 adult entertainment industry job vacancies that were advertised by the government's official job agency. These jobs, all legal, ranged from party planner; retail; non-dancing jobs in lap-dancing venues; dancers; adult chatline operators, models, warehouse packers, escorts, masseuse, topless TV channel presenters; web cam operators and performers; topless bar staff; nude butlers and cleaners; kissograms. Of the applicants, 59.1 per cent were male and 40.9 per cent female.⁴⁸

Supply routes into sex work increasingly come from middle-class women with educated backgrounds.⁴⁹ Highly skilled mainstream jobs such as nursing already require bodily and sexual labour, and some workers see sex work as more profitable and convenient.⁵⁰ More recently, United Kingdom studies are showing that female students are a supply route into the sex industry. With rising tuition fees, mounting debt, and only low-paid unskilled work to top up student loans, students find a variety of different sex markets are accessible, financially beneficial, and require little commitment.⁵¹ For middle-class and educated women (including students), the pull factors of the sex industry are making sex work a viable and attractive employment option with less social stigma. Indeed, as Agustín shows, there are groups of people in society for whom the sex industry is not a marginal but a mainstream work option.⁵² For migrant workers who are limited by a lack of visa documentation, rights to work, formal qualifications, and fear of immigration police, the sex industry, like other informal unregulated economies, are one of a very few number of work options.

On the other hand, there is evidence of continued resistance to the social acceptability of both selling and buying sex. The 'whore stigma' persists

48 DWP Consultation, 'Accepting and Advertising Employer Vacancies from Within the Adult Entertainment Industry by JobCentre Plus' (2008).

49 Bernstein, op. cit., n. 11.

50 T. Sanders, "'It's Just Acting": Sex Workers' Strategies for Capitalizing on Sexuality' (2005) 12 *Gender, Work and Organization* 319–42; Sanders, op. cit., n. 36.

51 R. Roberts, T. Sanders, E. Myers, and D. Smith, 'Participant in Sex Work: Students' Views' (2010) 9 *Sex Education* (forthcoming); R. Roberts, S. Bergstrom, and D. La Rooy, 'U.K. Students and Sex Work: Current Knowledge and Research Issues' (2007) 17 *J. of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 141–6.

52 L.M. Agustín, *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry* (2007).

amongst countries where there is direct criminalization of sex workers, but also in regimes of legalization there is still evidence of stigmatization. Bradley notes the continued stigma attached to exotic dancing amongst women in the United States which affects their personal and public relationships.⁵³ The Nevada brothels are legal establishments where women work, yet being a 'sex worker' in the United States is still far from socially acceptable.⁵⁴ Despite the existence of unions and campaign groups throughout the world, the sex work labour movement has struggled to be effective in achieving legal change and rights.⁵⁵ In many countries, including the United Kingdom and United States, those who work as sex workers (even in legitimate businesses) have no employment rights. In the United Kingdom, there is no recognition of the job role 'sex worker', so individuals cannot register with tax authorities as legitimate workers, and are therefore exempt from benefits such as sick or holiday pay and pension rights. Some of this social ambivalence is fuelled by the radical anti-sex-work movement which takes the rigid position that sexual labour is violence against women, oppressive and wholeheartedly not an acceptable work option for women.⁵⁶ Equally, as Weitzer has succinctly argued, the exaggerated official and media concerns relating to trafficking into the sex industry has been responsible for myth-making about the everyday realities of sex work for many women, and the continued discourses around victimization and exploitation as the *only* experience in the sex industry.⁵⁷ These factors mean that there continues to be a social ambivalence about the selling and buying of commercial sex across Western countries.

TRANSGRESSION AND MAINSTREAMING

The mainstreaming of the sex industry produces contradictory impulses. On the one hand, it helps the industry to grow and maximize profits by drawing new demographics into their customer and supply base and tapping high-end

53 M.S. Bradley, 'Girlfriends, Wives, and Strippers: Managing Stigma in Exotic Dancer Romantic Relationships' (2007) 28 *Deviant Behavior* 379–406.

54 Hausbeck and Brents, op. cit., n. 13; B.G. Brents and K. Hausbeck, 'Violence and Legalized Brothel Prostitution in Nevada: Examining Safety, Risk and Prostitution Policy' (2005) 20 *J. of Interpersonal Violence* 270–95.

55 G. Gall, 'Sex Worker Unionisation: An Exploratory Study of Emerging Collective Organisation' (2007) 38 *Industrial Relations J.* 70–88; T. Sanders and S. Lopez-Embury, 'Sex Worker Organisation and Unionisation' in *Prostitution: Sex Work, Policy and Politics*, eds. T. Sanders, M. O'Neill. and J. Pitcher (2009); J. West, 'Prostitution: Collectives and the Politics of Regulation' (2000) 7 *Gender, Work & Organization* 106–18.

56 S. Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (2008).

57 R. Weitzer, 'The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking: Ideology and Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade' (2007) 35 *Politics and Society* 447–75.

markets. It shatters preconceptions and age-old stereotypes about the types of people who sell and buy sex, through processes of upscaling, diversification, and gentrification. Sex work, for some, has become both a lifestyle choice and a potential work option. On the other hand, the adult sex industry has long relied on its transgressive nature to lure clients and to provide outlets for desire and sexual experiences that are pleasurable and exciting because they are beyond the bounds of mainstream culture. The element of titillation, surprise, and the unknown hold the mystique that cannot be eroded, otherwise the sex industry is no different from other leisure industries. The obvious irony of commercial sexual enterprises today is that their growth and successes with mainstreaming risks killing the thrill of participating in sexual communities that are absorbing and alluring precisely because they are taboo. There is therefore a fine line between the benefits of mainstreaming and the need to keep sexual enterprises just that little bit 'deviant' in order to keep the activities below the parapet of everyday consumption.

While the mainstreaming of the sex industry represents the liberalization of sexual culture, remaining social ambivalence produces contradictory regulations. In other words, the law both helps to expand and limits mainstreaming. Legal restrictions that seek to block mainstreaming often have an ironic function. They help ensure that sex businesses do not become so prolific that customers are saturated and lose interest in the experience that can be purchased. For instance, even in jurisdictions where brothels, sex shops, and lap-dancing clubs have a licence quota system, this operates to limit the number of sex businesses in any given locality. This, in turn, has the effect of keeping these businesses niche, specialized, busy, and profitable. Equally, anti-sex industry interests have the effect of raising the profile of lap-dancing activities and individual venues. Paradoxically, this eases the tension in commercial sex between mainstreaming and remaining taboo and tempting, allowing the best of both worlds for many segments of the commercial sex industry.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SEXUALITY AND SOCIAL ORDER

The sale of sex has always been a part of the commercial landscape in all epochs of civilization. In late capitalism, changing economic and social patterns have created the conditions that have allowed the sex industry to expand into mainstream economic markets. Neo-liberal policies designed to stimulate business and remove regulations have opened opportunities both for entrepreneurs and workers to capitalize on the growing markets for sex. Mainstreaming processes, led by economics, have to be understood in the context of neo-liberal policies, where the invitation to consume and commodify all aspects of social life are a powerful draw. Sexuality and intimacy have an important place in the market. As an array of sexual businesses are opening legally, they are increasingly integrated into mainstream business

associations, patterns of conducting business, joining or creating business associations, and marketing through mainstream channels and regulatory processes. The economic mainstreaming of sex businesses is not treated (very) differently in regulatory terms, or if they are, the requirements and restrictions are minimal and sometimes superficial. This has one significant disadvantage for the women who work in the venues: the sexualized nature of their working environment and their working conditions are not covered by health and safety laws, or checked by inspectors, and therefore there is little recourse to enforce better practices, standardized conditions or report exploitative employers and practices. Issues such as sexual harassment and poor employment rights are divorced from formal systems of regulation, rights, and protection. This has an effect on the ways in which women are open to exploitation in the workplace of sex businesses. Labour-market gender inequalities become everyday experiences for groups of women in this part of the service industry even as they, arguably, require more protection and attention to working conditions because of the very work they do. While these economic and labour market processes are becoming embedded, at the same time as there is an increasing acceptance of sexual commerce, there is also a backlash that drives deeper wedges between those for and against the industry, keeping alive the tired debates over 'exploitation' or 'work'.

What our comparative work is beginning to show is that increasing respectability accompanying economic mainstreaming has provided more legitimate work opportunities for women, who are the majority of the labour force, as sex workers. Women from the middle classes (and students) or at least not typically socially deprived status groups are entering the sex industries as workers. Men as consumers are accessing highly visible, normalized 'entertainment' in many different sex markets across the spectrum of indirect and direct sexual services. In between the seller and the consumer, all kinds of 'legitimate' businesses, including local and state officials, are benefiting and profiting from the mainstreaming of sexual consumption.

Yet, the economic mainstreaming of sexual commerce translates imperfectly into social or cultural mainstreaming. The sex industry has relied on and profited from its transgressive status. Reputations of 'red-light districts' are kept alive by their notoriety. Sporadic attention from the police maintains the label as an area of 'vice.' Inflated stories produced by the media attract voyeurs, vigilantes, the curious as well as those with intentions to purchase sex. The tainted windows of the lap-dancing bar, the shadowy suggestions posed by the female form, and the red carpets suggesting showbiz opulence are used to symbolize 'something different' and perhaps unobtainable in 'real' life. Therefore, the demand for sexual commerce is in many ways based on its marginalized and stigmatized status – an irony that is lost to those pushing prohibitionist policies in Europe and the United States.

This marginalized and stigmatized status creates casualties. For sex workers, at the level of their subjective identity, they are ostracized, live in

fear of the ‘whore stigma’, and cannot really go about sex work as a regular job without significant negative social impacts, which include criminalization, frequent experiences of violence, and little state protection. These consequences can have long-standing disastrous effects for those who gain criminal records, and are further barred from future job markets. The implications of stigma and criminalization essentially have a ‘trapping’ effect and produce more inequality for this group of women, as they are not treated as rightful workers in sex work and are ostracized from the mainstream labour market. For male purchasers, the new ‘respectability’ does not translate completely into acceptability of commercial sex as a healthy lifestyle option. Increasingly, ‘demand’ is highlighted as the root of immorality, criminality, and dangerous male sexuality and is becoming the new focus for punitive legislation, deterrence, and rehabilitation policies.⁵⁸ The control and regulation of certain types of sexuality and gender is highly implicated in these practices.

To conclude, the economic mainstreaming of sexual consumption has taken place in a context of the growth of the leisure industry in Western countries. This translates into accessible, visible, and potentially normalized sex markets. Despite this, the social and cultural acceptability of sex markets has not fully mirrored this mainstreaming. As a result, individuals who engage in the sex industry on either the supply or purchaser side continue to be regulated by social stigma and moralist attitudes that render the sex industries as culturally marginalized despite their increased social significance, economic profits, and little evidence of a dwindling in their popularity or place.

58 Sanders, op. cit., n. 46; J. Scoular, ‘Criminalising Punters: Evaluating the Swedish Position on Prostitution’ (2004) 26 *J. of Social Welfare and Family Law* 195–210; B. Brooks-Gordon, ‘Clients and Commercial Sex: Reflections on Paying the Price: A Consultation Paper on Prostitution’ (2005) *Crim. Law Rev.* 425–43; E. Bernstein, ‘The Meaning of the Purchase: Desire, Demand and the Commerce of Sex’ (2001) 2 *Ethnography* 389–420.